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The mirror of St. Edmund

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PROVO, UTAH

The Mirror of St Edmund

Done into Modern English
by
Francesca M. Steele

With a Preface by the Very Rev. Fr
Vincent McNabb, O.P.

London
Burns & Oates Ltd
mdcccv

Humphrey Eden

from daddy

Christmas 1907.

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Preface

WHEN the ship which bore St Edmund for the last time from his birth-land was losing sight of the white cliffs of Dover bathed in summer sun, the saint looked back on what he was leaving for ever. "He wept most bitterly, knowing in his heart that he would never see it again." But it was no regret for past or passing honours which sped his tears. He wept to see "that the kingdom would suffer infinite evils, and the Church be overwhelmed with a great slavery." It was with much sadness of heart that he left England in order to be free.

But, indeed, wherever he went, he could not fail to be a slave to his own zeal for souls. Queen Blanche, the mother of Saint Louis, knew little of his spirit when she proposed to the fugitive from the See of Canterbury that he should bear the yoke of helping her in ruling France. All he coveted was a cell in the Monastery of Pontigny, where Thomas à Becket had learnt the art of martyrdom. There he studied. Thence he came with the brethren to choir. Thence he went forth to

break the bread of the Word to the poor peasants who tilled the hills and valleys around the monastery. The only freedom he sought was to be a slave after his own fashion, by giving his time to God and man.

The little book which is presented to the reader in the following pages is the fruit of his quiet and of his zeal during the closing months of his life. It is addressed to a nun whom he often calls "Sister" and "Friend." But whether this "Sister" was in an English or a French convent we have no means of knowing. As part of the Mirror seems to have been written originally in French, it is not unlikely that the "Sister" for whom the Archbishop wrote belonged to some convent near Pontigny. Be that as it may, there is no little lesson to be learnt from the zeal of the holy Archbishop who, driven from his See, exiled from his beloved fatherland, harried by cares, wrung by sickness, could find heart to write a treatise on Perfection for a simple nun whose name will always be unknown. No trace of St Edmund's sorrow of heart has found its way into the little book. From first to last it is full of a certain child-like gentleness and—to use an old well-meaning word—mirth which is characteristic of most saints, but especi-

ally of saints of the thirteenth century, and more especially of St Edmund.

To those who satisfy themselves by skimming spiritual books, the Mirror of St Edmund will offer little beyond the charm of the English garb in which it now appears. But to the deeper sort of readers something more than a passing literary interest may there be found. The student of psychology will recall in the clearly marked divisions, the former Professor of Logic—in the recurrence of *threes* and *sevens*, the teacher of arithmetic—in such fine phrases as the "Master of Thieves," the consummate rhetorician—in the proof of God's existence, the thinker who first introduced Oxford to the Metaphysics of Aristotle. The historian will recognize in the matter and manner of the work the imprint of Scholasticism, and especially of that subtle blend of formalism and devotion which Edmund carried away from the schools of Paris. And the student of mystical theology will be glad to find in this Archbishop, taken from the Professor's chair, one of those master-seers who first laid down the broad ways of English asceticism.

St Edmund thus united in his soul the best fruits of his age and land. Philosopher and mystic, thinker and saint,

whether on the Metropolitan throne of Canterbury or in his exile's cell at Pontigny, whether expounding the Organon to throngs of Oxford students or writing a simple Mirror for an unknown nun, he was ever and everywhere a child of his age, a true scholastic for whom life's last end and reward was to know the truth and to love it for being true.

VINCENT MCNABB, O.P.

Contents

		PAGE
I	How a Man shall consider his State of Life	1
II	What it is to live perfectly, and what is God's Will	3
III	What makes Man Holy, and how he can know himself	4
IV	The Good Deeds of Our Lord ...	7
V	How Man shall spend his Time ...	10
VI	How Man shall see God in every Creature	13
VII	How Man may see God's Will in Holy Scripture	17
VIII	Of the Seven Deadly Sins	19
IX	Of the Seven Blessings of the Gospel	22
X	The Seven Gifts of the Holy Ghost...	24
XI	Of the Ten Commandments... ...	26
XII	Of the Seven Virtues	30
XIII	Of the Twelve Articles of the Faith	32
XIV	The Seven Sacraments	33
XV	The Four Cardinal Virtues	34
XVI	On the Seven Works of Mercy ...	36
XVII	The Seven Prayers of the Pater Noster	40
XVIII	Of the Seven Gifts of Body and Soul	56
XIX	Of the Contemplation of God ...	58
XX	Contemplation before Matins ...	59
XXI	Contemplation before Prime ...	61
XXII	Contemplation before Terce... ...	62
XXIII	Contemplation before Mid-day ...	63
XXIV	Contemplation before None	65
XXV	Contemplation before Evensong ...	67
XXVI	Contemplation before Compline ...	69

PAGE

XXVII Of the Contemplation of God in His Manhood 70
XXVIII Of the Contemplation of God in His Deity 73
XXIX Of Contemplation 76
XXX How to live Honourably and Charitably and Meekly... 78

The Mirror of St Edmund

Here begins the Mirror of St Edmund, Archbishop of Canterbury

Chapter j

How a Man shall consider his State of Life

"Videte vocationem vestram"

THESE words St Paul says in his epistle, and they are thus translated into English, "Consider your state of life." These words are meant for us Religious Men, and he says them to excite us to perfection. And therefore at what hour I think of myself by night or by day, on the one side I have great joy, and on the other side great sorrow. Joy for holy religion; and sorrow and confusion for my wicked life and feeble conversation. And this is no wonder for I have great occasion.

As St Eusebius says in his sermon: "To enter into religion is sovereign perfection, and therein not to live perfectly is sovereign damnation." And therefore

there is but one way to live in religion, and that is to follow perfection, and as thou willest thy salvation, to leave all that is in this world and all that belongs to it, and set thy will to live perfectly.

Chapter ij

What it is to live perfectly, and what is God's Will

TO live perfectly, as St Bernard teaches us, is to live honourably, meekly and charitably. Honourably as to God; setting thy intention to do His will; that is to say: that in all things that thou shalt think in thy heart, or say with thy mouth, or do indeed with any of thy five senses, seeing of the eyes, hearing of the ears, smelling of the nose, tasting of the tongue, touching of the hands, walking or standing, lying or sitting, consider at the beginning if it be God's will or not. And if it be God's will do it with all thy might, and if it be not His will, do it not but rather suffer death.

But now thou mayest ask me, "What is God's will?" I tell thee His will is no other thing but thy holiness, as the apostle says in his epistle "Haec est voluntas Dei; sanctificatio vestra"; that is to say that "it is God's will that thou be holy."

Chapter iij

What makes Man Holy, and how he can know himself

BUT now mayst thou ask me: "What makes man holy?" I tell thee, two things only, namely, knowledge and love. Knowledge of truth and love of goodness. But to the knowledge of God that is truth, canst thou never come but by knowledge of thyself; and to the love of God canst thou never come but through the love of thy fellow-Christian.

To the knowledge of thyself mayst thou come by diligent meditation; and to the knowledge of God through pure contemplation. To the knowledge of thyself thou mayst come in this way: Think diligently and often, what thou art, what thou wast, and what thou shalt be. First, as to thy body. Thou art now viler than any dunghill. Thou wast begotten in so great vileness, that it is shame and abomination thereon to think. Thou shalt be delivered to toads and adders to eat. Now shalt thou think as to thy soul, what thou hast been and what thou art; for what thou shalt be, thou mayst not know

now. Consider now how many and great sins thou hast done, and how many and great good things thou hast left undone. Think how long thou hast lived and what thou hast received, and how thou hast spent it.

For every hour that thou hast not thought of God, thou hast lost. For thou shalt yield account of every idle thought, of every idle word, of every idle deed. And just as thou hast not one hair of thy head that shall not be glorified, if thou be saved, just so shall no hour escape that shall not be counted.

Ah! JESU, mercy! If all this world were full of dust, who should be so skilful, that he could weigh each atom by itself, and separate each from the other? Certainly, no man. But the soul is a thousand times greater than all this world if the world were a thousand times greater than it is; and it is full of divers thoughts, desires and yearnings; who then could search his heart that he might know all that is therein, or think it? See now, my dear friend, how thou hast great need to know thyself.

Afterwards take good heed what thou art now as to thy soul; how thou hast little good in thee, little wit, little power, for thou yearnest every day after that, that

avails thee nought, and seldom or never after that, that may avail thee. Dear friend, thou art deceived so often with vain joy, now travailing with fear, now lifted aloft with false trust. See now on the other side, thou art so changeable, that that thou wilt do to-day, thou wilt not to-morrow, and oft-times thou art troubled about many things, and tormented if thou hast them not, and even when thou hast them at thy will, then art thou troubled concerning them. Think yet on the other hand, how thou art easy to tempt, frail to resist and ready to assent. From all this wickedness has thy sweet Lord Jesus, thy Spouse, delivered thee, and delivers thee every day more and more.

Chapter iv

The Good Deeds of Our Lord

FOR when thou wast nought, He made thee, in soul after His own likeness and His image, and made thy body o foul scum of the earth, whereof it is abomination to think; He made thee in mind and in body, so noble and so fair as no man can tell. Think diligently, thou that lovest thy father and mother so tenderly, why thou lovest them so dearly. If thou sayest that thou lovest thy father and thy mother, because thou art of their flesh and blood; on the other hand, thou hast neither body nor soul of them, but thou hast both of God through them. For what wouldst thou have been, hadst thou remained such as thou wast begotten of them in sin? On the other hand, if thou lovest brethren or sisters or other kindred because they are of the same flesh of father or of mother, and of their blood, by the same reason shouldst thou love a piece of their flesh, if it were shorn away; and that would be an immeasurable error.

If thou sayst thou lovest them, be-

cause they are made in the likeness of man, and because they have a soul even as thou hast; then is thy own brother no nearer than another but inasmuch as thou and he have both of one father and mother, the beginning of your flesh. Therefore thou shalt love Him of whom all thy beauty comes, and thou shalt love every one spiritually, and from henceforth flee from carnal love.

If thou thinkest inwardly of the good things He has done for thee and shalt do for thee, if thou wilt love Him entirely, it will stir thee to love Him the more heartily. For as I said at the beginning, when thou wast nought, He made thee of nought; and when thou wast lost, He found thee; and when thou wast perished, He sought thee; and when thou wast sold to sin, He bought thee; and when thou wast lost eternally, He saved thee. And when thou wast born in sin, He baptized thee, and often afterwards when thou didst sin so foully and so often, then He bore with thee so generously and awaited thine amendment so long, and since received thee so sweetly and placed thee, through His grace, in His sweet fellowship. And every day when thou fallest, then He reproves thee, and when thou repentest, then He forgives thee, and when

thou errest, then He amends thee, when thou doubtest, He teaches thee, and when thou hungerest, then He feeds thee, and when thou art cold, then He warms thee, and when thou art hot, then He cools thee, and when thou sleepest, then He saves thee, and when thou risest up, then he upholds thee, and evermore when thou art ill at ease, then He comforts thee.

These good things and many more our sweet Lord, thy Spouse, Jesus Christ, hath done unto thee. Thou shalt consider evermore the sweetness of His heart and ever speak thereof and ever thank Him, and that both night and day if thou knowest aught of love.

Chapter v

How Man shall spend his Time

FIRST, when thou risest from thy bed in morning-tide, and at midnight, think thou how many thousand men have perished that night, in body and soul; some in fire and some in water, some in divers other manners, as by sea and by land; some robbed and wounded, some slain, some dead suddenly without shrift, wherefore they are fallen into endless pain. Think also how many thousand men have fallen that night into peril of soul; that is to say into deadly sin, as into gluttony, covetousness and many other follies. From all these wickednesses hath our sweet Lord delivered thee without thy deserving.

What service hast thou done for Him, that He has thus kept thee, and forsaken and lost many others? For if thou takest good heed how great good He has done to thee, on every side thou shalt find Him occupied about thy profit, as if He did no other thing but only were attending to thee, and to thy health, as if

He had forgotten all this world, to take heed only of thee.

And when thou hast this thought, lift up thy hands and thank thy Lord for this and all other good things, and say: "My Lord Jesus Christ, I thank Thee that hast kept me, thine unworthy servant, this night or day, and hast brought me whole, safe and spotless unto this time, and for all other goods and benefits that Thou hast given me, through Thy goodness and Thy pity only, Thou that with the Father and the Holy Ghost livest and reignest God evermore, world without end. Amen."

Dear friend, in this same manner shalt thou say when thou risest at morn, and when thou liest down at even. And when thou hast done so, thou shalt then diligently think how thou hast spent that day (or that night) and pray God for mercy for the ill that thou hast done, and for the good that thou hast left undone, unto that time. And, dear friend, do nothing in this life till thou commendest thyself and thy friends, quick and dead, into the hands of thy sweet Lord Jesus Christ, saying in this manner:

"Lord Jesus Christ, into Thy Hands and into the hands of Thy holy angels I give this night (or this day) my soul

and my body, my father and my mother, my brothers and my sisters, friends and servants, neighbours and kindred, my benefactors and all Christian folk. Keep us, Lord, this night (or this day), through the merits and the prayers of blessed Mary and all Thy saints, from vices and wicked desires, from sin and from temptation of the devil, from sudden and unprepared death, and from the pains of hell. Enlighten my heart with the Holy Ghost and with Thy holy grace. Make me evermore obedient to Thy commands, and suffer me nevermore to separate myself from Thee, Eternal Jesus, Lord in Trinity. Amen."

If thou dost this, then shalt thou have true self-knowledge, for thus says Holy Writ: If thou trustest in thyself, to thyself thou shalt be delivered; and if thou trustest in God, and not in thyself, to God shalt thou be given. And this manner of consideration is called meditation; and by this manner of meditation shalt thou come to the knowledge of God by holy contemplation.

Chapter vj

How Man shall see God in every Creature

KNOW thou that there are three kinds of contemplation. The first is in creatures. The second is in Holy Scripture. The third is in God Himself, in His nature. Contemplation is nothing else but the sight of the goodness of God. The goodness of God in His creatures thou mayst see in this manner. Three things are in God: power or might, wisdom and goodness. Power is attributed to God the Father; wisdom to God the Son; and goodness to God the Holy Ghost.

Through God's power are all things made, and through His wisdom are all things marvellously ordained, and through His goodness are they increased every day. His power mayst thou see by their greatness and their form; His wisdom by their beauty and order; His goodness by their increasing. Their greatness mayest thou see by their four dimensions, that is to say, by their height, and by their depth, and by their breadth, and by their length; His wisdom mayst thou see, if thou takest heed how He has given to every creature

to be. Some He has given only to be, as to stones; to others to be and to live, as to grass and trees. To others to be, to live, to feel, as to beasts. To others to be, to live, to feel, and with reason to understand, as to man and to angels. For stones are, but they have neither life nor feeling nor understanding. Trees are, and they live, but they feel not. Beasts are, live, and feel, but have not understanding. Men are; they live, they feel, and they understand, and they have being with stones, life with trees, feeling with beasts, and understanding with angels.

Here shalt thou think diligently of the dignity of mankind; how it surpasses every creature. And therefore says St Austin: "I would not have the state of an angel, if I might have the state that is ordained to man."

Think also that that man deserves great confusion, that will not live as his degree and his condition demand. For all the creatures in the world are made only for man. Those that are useful are made for three reasons: to help us at work, as oxen and horses; to cover us and clothe us, as linen, wool and leather; to feed and support us, as beasts of the earth, fishes of the sea, corn of the field.

And the noisome creatures, as poisonous

herbs and venomous beasts, are made for three things: for our chastising, for our amendment, and for our teaching. We are chastised and punished when we are hurt. And that is a great mercy of God, that He will chastise us bodily, that we be not punished eternally. We are amended when we think that all these noxious things are come upon us for our sins; for when we see such little creatures can hurt us, then we think on our wretchedness, and then we are humble. Also we are taught, because we see in these creatures the wonderful works of God our Maker; for the works of the ant avail more to our example and edification, than the strength of the lion or of the bear.

Also, as I have said of beasts, so understand of herbs; and when thou hast done in this manner, raise up thy heart unto God, and think how great is His power to make all things of nothing, and to give them existence, and how great His wisdom to ordain them in so great beauty, and how great His bounty to multiply them every day for our profit.

Ah! mercy, God! how unkind we are! We mis-use all His creatures, and He makes them. We confound them, and He governs them. We destroy them every day, and He multiplies them. And

therefore say to Him in thy heart: "Lord, because Thou art, they are; and because Thou art fair, they are fair; and because Thou art good, they are good. With good right they Thy creatures love Thee and honour Thee, and glorify Thee, O blessed God in Trinity! With good right, they love Thee for their goodness. With good right, they honour Thee for their fairness. With good right, they glorify Thee for their profit, O Blessed God in Trinity, through whose power all things are made, through whose wisdom all things are governed, through whose bounty all things are multiplied; to Him be honour and glory without end. Amen."

Chapter vij

How Man may see God's Will in Holy Scripture

THE second degree of contemplation is in Holy Writ. But now thou mayst say to me: "I that know no letters, that am not learned, how may I ever come to contemplation of Holy Writ?" Now, my dear friend, understand me sweetly, and I shall perchance say to thee: "All that is written may be spoken. If thou canst not understand Holy Writ, hear gladly the good that man tells thee, and when thou hearest Holy Writ, either in sermons or in private discourse, take heed immediately, if thou hearest aught that may avail thee to edification, to hate sin and to love virtue, to fear pain and to desire joy, to despise this world and to hasten to bliss, and what thou shalt do and how thou shalt live; and all that enlightens thine understanding in the knowledge of truth; and all that kindles thy will and affection in the fire of love; for of these two good things is all that is written in Holy Writ hiddenly or plainly.

Out of Holy Writ thou shalt draw and

learn which are the seven deadly sins and their branches; and the seven virtues and the ten commandments; and the twelve articles of the creed and the seven sacraments of Holy Church; and the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost and the seven works of mercy; and the seven virtues of the gospel and the seven prayers of the *Pater noster*.

Chapter viij

Of the Seven Deadly Sins

THERE are seven deadly sins; pride, envy, anger, sloth, covetousness, gluttony and lust. Pride is love of haughtiness, and therefrom come these seven branches. Disobedience against God or against the sovereign; that is to leave that which is commanded, or to do that which is forbidden: the second branch is arrogance, that is when a man undertakes things above his power, or supposes himself to be wiser, or better than he is, and boasts of good that he has of others, or of evil that he has of himself. The third branch is hypocrisy, that is when a man feigns to have goodness that he has not, and hides the wickedness that he has. The fourth branch of pride is contempt of thy fellow-Christian, that is when a man detracts from another's goodness, that he himself may seem the better. The fifth branch is boasting, when a man makes comparisons between his own wickedness, and other men's wickedness, that his own may seem the less. The sixth

branch is boldness, when a man has no shame of open sin. The seventh branch is elation, that is when a man has a proud heart, so that he will suffer neither equal nor master.

Dear friend, thou shalt know that these are the things whereof a man prides himself: of the things that he has of inheritance, as beauty, or strength, or good wit, or noble kindred: of the things he has by purchase, as science, grace, fame, dignity, or office; and earthly things, as clothing, housing, rents, possessions, men, horses, and worldly honour.

The next deadly sin is envy. And that is joy of other men's harm, and sorrow of other men's welfare. And that may be in the heart through the will, or in the mouth through detraction, or in deed through withdrawing of good or procuring of evil. Envy makes a man heavy of heart because he sees other men more worthy than he in anything.

The third deadly sin is wrath; that is an unreasonable temper of heart, and of it comes strife and contentions, shameful words, menaces, scorn and wicked slanders.

The fourth deadly sin is sloth, and that makes man's heart heavy and slow in good deeds, and makes prayer or holiness

irksome, and throws a man into the wickedness of despair for it slackens the pleasures of spiritual love.

The fifth deadly sin is covetousness, and that is an immoderate love of earthly goods, and it destroys and blinds man's heart. And from it come treasons, false oaths, unrest, malice and hardness of heart against mercy.

The sixth deadly sin is gluttony, which makes a man serve wicked desires of the flesh which he should master and overcome. Of gluttony come vain joy, much speech, and little understanding.

The seventh deadly sin is lust, and of it come blindness of heart, instability in prayer, love of self, hatred of God, love of this world, dread and despair of the bliss of heaven.

Dear friend, these are the seven deadly sins, and well are they called deadly sins, for pride separates man from his God, envy from his fellow-Christian, anger from himself, sloth torments him, covetousness beguiles him, gluttony deceives him, and lust holds him in thraldom.

Chapter ix

Of the Seven Blessings of the Gospel

AGAINST the seven deadly sins, our Lord left seven blessings in the Gospel, as remedies, and said thus: "Blessed be the meek of spirit, for theirs is the joy of heaven"; that is against pride, that despoileth man of God.

"Blessed be the gentle (debonnaire) to his brother, for he shall inherit the earth"; that is against envy, that robs a man of his brother.

"Blessed be they that weep, for they shall be comforted"; that is against wrath, that divides a man in two.

"Blessed be the merciful that have mercy of others, for God will have mercy on them"; that is against covetousness, that has mercy or pity on no man.

"Blessed be they that hunger after righteousness, for they shall be fed"; that is against sloth.

"Blessed be the clean of heart, for they shall see the face of God"; that is against gluttony that thinketh always of fleshly lusts.

"Blessed be the peaceful, for they shall

be called the children of God"; that is against lust, because the dissolute have neither rest nor peace of heart.

Against pride man shall have in his heart, and in his mouth, and in his deeds, steadfast meekness. Against envy, joy in heart of other men's welfare, and sorrow of others' harm, and love of all men. Against wrath, patience and simpleness. Against sloth, a light heart in God's service and in all good deeds. Against covetousness, giving with a good heart to poor men. Against lust, chastity of body, of heart, of tongue, of eyes. Against gluttony, moderation in meat and drink, especially in drink, for through too much drink come many wickednesses.

Chapter x

The Seven Gifts of the Holy Ghost

NOW thou hast heard the seven manner of sicknesses of man's soul, and their medicines. After cometh the Great Physician and giveth His medicines, that heal man from the seven vices, and confirm him in the seven virtues, through the gifts of the Holy Ghost. The which are these: the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and of strength, the spirit of knowledge and of pity, the spirit of fear of God Almighty.

Through these gifts our Lord Jesus teacheth man all that he has need of for the active life, and for the contemplative life. And see how first man should leave evil and do good; leave evil, as the spirit of the fear of God teacheth us, and do good as the spirit of pity teacheth us.

And there are two things that hinder us from doing good; that is to say, prosperity and tribulation; weal and woe; for prosperity deceives us with flattery, tribulation with hardness; therefore thou shalt despise the prosperity of this world, that thou be not deceived, and that the spirit of

knowledge teaches thee; and thou shalt steadfastly suffer tribulation, that thou be not overcome; and that the spirit of strength teacheth thee. These four suffice to the active life.

The other three belong to the life that is called contemplative, for there are three kinds of contemplation: one in creatures, and that the spirit of understanding teacheth; another in Holy Writ, where thou mayest see what thou shalt do and what thou shalt leave undone, and that the spirit of counsel teacheth; the third is in God Himself, and that the spirit of wisdom teacheth us. Now thou seest, through the gifts of Jesus, how busy He is about our welfare.

Chapter xi

Of the Ten Commandments

THE first commandment is, "Thou shalt worship but one God thy Lord, and Him only shalt thou serve." That is to say, worship Him with right truth and serve Him only with good works. Here shalt thou think, if thou hast loyally served God and worshipped God; if thou hast served Him above all things; if thou hast paid Him that which thou promisedst; if thou hast done true penance and if thou hast paid Him that thou promisedst in baptism, that was to forsake the devil and all his works and to trust steadfastly in God. This commandment teaches man his duty to God the Father.

In the second commandment it is forbidden to take God's name in vain, and lying and fraud are therein forbidden. This commandment teaches man his duty towards God the Son, who said: "I am the Truth."

The third commandment is, "Remember that thou keep thy holy days," that is to say, in thine own heart to keep thyself in rest and peace, without doing manual

labour. This teaches man his duty towards God the Holy Ghost.

These three commandments teach man how he shall behave towards the Holy Trinity, in Whose likeness he is made in soul.

The other seven commandments teach man how he shall behave towards his fellow-Christian. The first is, "Thou shalt honour thy father and thy mother," bodily and spiritually, and that in two ways, that is to say, that thou be obedient to them, in reverence and honour, and that thou help them after thy power in all things that they have need of, "that thou be of long life on earth"; for if thou wilt be of long life, it is reasonable that thou honour them of whom thou hast thy life, for he that will not honour him through whom he is, it is not right that he be more than he is.

The second commandment is, "Thou shalt slay no man." Here shalt thou know that murder (manslaughter) is of many kinds, for there is manslaughter of the hand, of the tongue and of the heart. Manslaughter of the hand is when a man slays another with his hand, or when he puts him in the bonds of death, as in prison, or in a state that may be an occasion of death. Manslaughter of the tongue

is in two ways, through command or through enticement. Manslaughter of the heart is also in two ways, that is, when a man yearns for and covets the death of another, and when he suffers another man to die and will not deliver him if he have the power.

The third commandment is this, "Thou shalt not commit adultery," and that is right; whoso will have the life without corruption in the joy of heaven, him it behoves to keep his mortal life without corruption of body.

The fourth commandment is this, "Thou shalt do no theft nor fraud," and that is right; for he that will save other men's lives will not take away that which might sustain their lives.

The fifth commandment is this, "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy fellow-Christian, with him who will hurt or slay him"; and that is right; for he that will not injure his neighbour, will not consent nor give counsel to do him ill:

The sixth commandment and the seventh are this, "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor shalt thou covet his house nor none of his goods," for he that has a wicked will and bad intention in his heart, he cannot long withhold himself from wicked deeds; and, therefore,

if thou wilt not commit sin, thou wilt not covet a man or woman in thy heart; and if thou wilt not steal, thou wilt not covet other men's things in thy heart.

Dear friend, these are the ten commandments that God gave Moses in the Mount of Sinai. The three first pertain to the love of God and the other seven to the love of thy fellow-Christian.

Chapter xij

Of the Seven Virtues

NOW shalt thou know which are the seven virtues, that is to say, Faith, Hope and Love, Prudence and Justice, Strength or Fortitude, and Temperance. The seven virtues are of the same nature as the ten commandments, but this is the difference between them: The ten commandments teach us what we shall do, and the seven virtues how we shall do it.

The three first, Faith, Hope and Love, appoint how thou shalt live as to God. The other four, which are called cardinal virtues, how thou shalt order thine own life that it shall lead thee to the joy of heaven. Dear friend, thou oughtest to know that we are all made for one end, that is to say, to know God, to possess Him and to love Him.

But these things are needful to provide for our coming to this good end, that is, to know whither we shall go, and to will to come thither, and to trust to come thither; for great folly were it for a man to begin a thing he cannot end.

Yet on the other side the man that will do well needs to have wisdom, power and will, that is to say, that he knows how to do (well), and that he can do well, and that he will do (well). But because we have not knowledge, power nor will of ourselves, therefore has God given us faith to fulfil the defect of our knowledge, hope to fulfil the defect of our power, true love to order our will to both one and the other.

Faith unites us to God the Son, to Whom belongeth wisdom; hope to God the Father, to Whom belongeth power; love to God the Holy Ghost, to Whom belongeth goodness. And therefore faith makes us to have knowledge of God; and that knowledge tells us that He is wonderfully courteous, and in this way and that largely gives us of His good things; and of that knowledge cometh hope; and of that knowledge, that says that He is good, comes the third virtue, that is love.

Chapter xiij

Of the Twelve Articles of the Faith

DEAR friend, here shalt thou know which are the twelve articles of the faith. The first is this: that God is One in Himself, and Three in persons without beginning and without end; and that He made all things out of nought by His word. The second article is that God's Son took flesh and blood of the Blessed Maiden Mary, and was born of her, true God and true man. The third is, that He was dead and buried, not because of necessity, but to buy us of His free will. The fourth article is, that the same Jesus rose from the dead to life, and we shall rise also. The fifth article is, that the same true God and Man ascended up into heaven in manhood and Godhead, and we shall ascend up also through His grace.

Chapter xiv

The Seven Sacraments

THE sixth article is Baptism, that cleanses man from original sin which he inherits, and gives grace.

The seventh article is Confirmation, that confirms the Holy Ghost on him who is christened.

The eighth article is Penance, that does away all manner of sin, deadly and venial.

The ninth is the Sacrament of the Altar, that confirms the penitent and gives him strength, that he falls not again into sin, and upholds him and reconciles him.

The tenth article is Orders, that gives power to them that are ordained to do their office and to administer the sacraments.

The eleventh article is Matrimony, that protects man and wife from mortal sin.

The twelfth article is Anointing, that is done to the sick, in peril of death, for healing of body and soul.

Chapter xv

The Four Cardinal Virtues

DEAR friend, after this shalt thou know which are the four cardinal virtues through which all man's life is governed in this world, that is, Prudence, Justice, Fortitude and Temperance. Of these four the Holy Ghost says in the Book of Wisdom, that there is nothing more profitable to man on earth. And see now wherefore. Whoso would do anything well, he must first be able to choose the evil from the good, and of two good things choose the better; and this virtue is called Prudence.

Afterwards thou shalt leave the ill, and do the good; and do the greater good and leave the lesser good; and this is the virtue that is called Justice.

And because two things hinder man from doing well and leaving the ill, that is to say, prosperity of this world, for it deceives him with false vanities, and tribulation which cast him down with many hardships; against prosperity shalt thou have moderation, that thou be not overhigh; and this virtue is called Temper-

ance. And against adversity shalt thou have hardiness, that thou be not cast down; and that virtue is called Fortitude or Strength.

Chapter xvj

On the Seven Works of Mercy

HEREAFTER shalt thou know which are the seven works of mercy. The first work of mercy is to give meat to the hungry. The second is to give drink to the thirsty. The third is to clothe the naked. The fourth is to harbour the harbourless. The fifth is to visit them that are in prison. The sixth is to comfort the sick. The seventh is to bury the dead.

These are the seven works of mercy that belong to the body. But now mayst thou say to me: "How should I do them that am in religion, and have nothing to give to eat or to drink; nor clothes to give to the naked, nor shelter to offer the harbourless, for I am at other man's will, and not at my own? Therefore were it better that I were secular, that I might do these works of mercy."

Ah! dear friend, be not beguiled. Better is it to have pity and compassion in thy heart for him that has misery and wretchedness than that thou hadst all this world to give for charity, for it is better

with compassion to give thyself as thou art, than it is to give that which thou hast. Therefore, dear friend, give thyself, and then givest thou more than is in all this world.

But now mayst thou say to me on this manner: "True it is that it is better to give himself than to give of his possessions, but better is both than is one by itself, for less is one good than two." It is not so; for whether is it better to be called God or His servant? Thou knowest well that it is better to be called God. But those that suffer hunger, thirst, cold and want, and other wretchedness and misery, our Lord Jesus Christ calls "Himself," for He says thus in the gospel: "What also thou didst to the least of Mine, thou didst to Me."

On the other hand, whether is better to judge or to be judged? Certainly, to judge. And that the poor shall do; they shall judge the rich, as Jesus saith in the gospel: "They that have forsaken all things for love of Me, at the day of doom when I sit on the throne of My Majesty, they shall sit upon twelve thrones and judge the twelve tribes of Israel."

And whether is better the joy of heaven in possession or in hope? Certainly, in possession. And that have the poor in

spirit, for, as Jesus saith in the gospel, theirs is the joy of heaven.

And therefore saith St Bernard: "The poor have nought on earth and the rich have nought in heaven." Therefore if the rich will have anything they must buy it of the poor.

Now, know I well, thou covetest to know which are the poor and which not. Now hearken with devotion. Some there are that have riches and love them, and those are the covetous of this world. Others there are that have them not, but they love them, and they would have them gladly; and these are the wretched beggars of the world, and the false folk in religion, and these are as rich or richer than the others in will. And of them Jesus says in His gospel that "easier it were for a camel to pass through a needle's eye than the rich to come into the bliss of heaven."

Some there are that have riches, but they love them not, although they have them; and these are the good men of the world, that spend well that that they have. But few are of these. There are others that have not riches, nor love them, nor will have them; and these are the good folks that are in religion, and that are truly poor, and theirs is the joy of heaven, for that is the blessing of the poor.

Then it behoves that the rich have the reverse of that blessing, and therefore may I say: "Blessed be the poor, for theirs is the kingdom and the joy of heaven." And so may I say of the rich, for theirs is the pain of hell. Also poor are they that have poverty, and love not riches; and poor also are they that have riches, and love poverty.

Chapter xvij

The Seven Prayers of the Pater Noster

NOW after this, oughtest thou to know which are the seven prayers of the *Pater noster*, that does away all ill and purchases all good. And these seven prayers are contained in the *Pater noster*, which our Lord Jesus Christ taught His disciples, how they should pray to God the Father, and said to them, "When ye shall pray, on this wise shall ye say: *Pater noster qui es in cœlis, etc.*"

Now my friend, know thou, that our Lord Jesus Christ teaches us in the gospel to make this prayer. And therefore I would that thou knewest at the beginning what is Prayer or Orison, and afterwards that thou understandest the prayer of the *Pater noster.*

Prayer or Orison is nothing else but yearning of soul, with certain trust that that thou prayest for comes. And in that trust Jesus Christ places us when He teaches us to call God "our Father, Who is in heaven"; for in Him shall man have certain trust, that He may and will give

all goodness that our soul can desire and much more, which is betokened by these words, *Qui es in cœlis*, that is to say, "Who art in heaven." For if God will call Himself our Father, then He makes us to know, that He loves us as children, and that He will give us all that we have need of.

But certainly, if all the love that father or mother ever had unto their children, or all other loves of this world, were gathered together in one love, and if that love were multiplied as much as man's heart might think, yet it could nothing attain to the love that God our Father has unto us, although we are His enemies. And that shall we well see, through the grace of God, if we look on what manner He is our Father, and what He has done for us.

Know thou, that when God made all things of nought, we read not that He made any creature in His likeness, except man alone; and therefore He is God and Maker, of all things of the world, but He is not their Father; but unto us, through His own power full of mercy, is He God and Maker and Father, for our soul is truly like unto the likeness of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost, that are one God and Three Persons.

And all this world He has made to

serve man, whilst man will live in His true love, as His own child. But as soon as we separate from that true love for love of this life, or for any other thing, we lose the "lordship" of this world, and become thralls drearily to the devil, where we were before free, and heirs of the heritage of the kingdom of heaven, with power over the wealth of this world.

Alas! I may say, alas! alas! what a sorrowful thing is here! Know thou well that here is great love—when God that is without beginning, and without changing, and dwells without ending, for He is the almightiest and all wisest and also best of all that man's heart may think, in Whom is love and endless joy—here, I say, is a token of great love, that He deigned to make us in His own likeness, as if we had been His own chosen children, and might have left us to be a little vile matter, as we were made of our mother, or He might have made us at His will, like any other kind of beast, and then had we died both body and soul together.

But when He had made us man and given us a soul in His own likeness—praised and loved be that Lord!—to be heirs of the heritage of heaven, and live in that great joy without end, there is no man's

heart so hard that it may not soften and love such a God with all his might, and his heart should melt, filled with joy, if he thought verily of that grace that our Lord has done for us before all other creatures.

And yet more did He, through His great mercy. For when we, through our sorrowful sins, were separated from God, our sweetest Father, and become thralls to the evil spirit, then He through His greatest mercy sent His own Son, that with Him is God in His Godhead, to take flesh and blood of the Virgin Mary, Maiden and Mother, living in joy everlasting, and in this manner did He that died. He took our flesh in a state of bondage, to suffer the guiltiest poverty and shame, and suffering and pain, He that never did ill, nor no manner of sin, and afterwards destined Himself to the vilest death and the shamefullest that man can think, to deliver us wretches from sorrowful bonds, and from the pain and prison of hell, and to make us come to the high heaven, where we shall be as kings crowned in bliss, if we do the will of that sweet Lord, that for us appointed Him to die on the Cross as though He had been a wicked thief.

Dear friend, now hast thou here two things in which God has showed us that

He is our Father, and that He loves us as His own children, though we are against Him with our wicked sins. The first is that He made us in His own likeness, and the other is that He bought us from prison with His own precious death of His manhood. For the first is man bound to Him, to love Him with all His heart.

But then mayest thou ask: "What shall I do to Him for the other thing, for if I shall with all my might praise God the Father and love Him and serve Him with all my soul, and with all my heart, in all things because He made me of nought and gave me a soul after His own likeness, as it was commanded in the Old Law, before God was born and became man for us, what must I now do to Him, when He for me, wretched sinner, lowered Himself so much that He would become man, and He gave Himself for me, when He through His sweetest mercy would die for me the most painful and the most vile death that ever was thought of? I know not what I can say here, for if I might live a hundred years, and if I might in that time every day die once a day as vile a death as He did for me, yet were it nothing against His great gift, when He is truly said to be God's

Son of heaven, Who gave Himself to us, who were lost through sin and put into the pain of hell, and there in despite of Him served the devil. How should we then yield Him the great good gift, when He would send His own Son to suffer pain for our sins?"

Now I shall teach thee, if God give me grace, how our dear Father asks no other store but that we heartily know our own feebleness, and our wretchedness that we have for our own sins. Then shall we be in bitterness of penance, and cry to Him quickly for mercy, that He save us for His holy name, for of ourselves have we nothing to yield Him.

Therefore said the prophet in the psalm, *Quid retribuam Domino pro omnibus quæ retribuit mihi. Calicem salutaris accipiam, et nomen Domini invocabo*, etc. That is, what shall I yield to God for all His good gifts that he gives me? The cup of salvation, whereof drank the Lord Jesus our Saviour, that is, the bitterness of penance in His great pains, and that man in all his thoughts should call on the name of God, and truly know that he has nothing of himself but sorrow and sin.

And know thou, if truth be set fast in thy soul, the more that thou knowest thee

for wretched and feeble, the more shalt thou humble thyself and call on His mercy. And thus it was with our sweet Lady, Maiden and Mother; for she had more grace than any in this life, man or woman, that ever was born; therefore she held herself less and lower than any other, and more cried she mercy than any other man, when verily God's Son lay in her womb. My dear friend, see now afterwards, why our Lord Jesus teaches us in the Gospel to say, "Our Father," and not "My Father." For by that will He teach us, that we should gather all men with us in our prayers, "for all are our brethren, christened and unchristened men, for we all have for our ruler a Father"; and that through the grace of God thou mayest see this thing clearly, give good attention to all that I say.

Thou callest him thy fleshly brother that has his body of the same man and woman that thou hast thine. Then shalt thou well hold him thy brother that has his soul of the same heavenly Father, of Whom thou hast thy soul, and of the same nature, and in the same likeness, for God made every man in the likeness of the Trinity, as well as He did thee, and we should love this brotherhood more and hold it more dear than the brotherhood of

the flesh, inasmuch as the soul is more noble than the flesh, and inasmuch as God our Father in heaven is more noble and more to be loved than our fleshly father.

And that should we do, if we saw as clearly with our ghostly eyes as we do with our bodily eyes. But because we see only with the eyes of the flesh, as the beasts of the field, we have no knowledge, and no love, except that of brotherhood that comes of foul flesh. Alas! alas! what sorrowful thing has thus blinded us? Certainly nothing blinds man's soul more than love of earthly things, that soon end. Therefore it behoves man to forsake his own will if he will perfectly know the most lovable brotherhood, whereof I have now spoken much, for whatsoever we have, in body or in soul, of goodness or of beauty, we have it of the Father in heaven. God, that is to us Father, and equally to all His creatures, not only for His making us of nought, nor for the governing of His grace, but for His purchase that He made of us, who were lost children, with His flesh and His blood, that He gave for us, as St Austin, the noble clerk, witnesses. He says, the Father gave His Son through whom He would buy us thralls. He gave the Holy Ghost through

Whom He would purchase the thralls His children. The Son He gave in price of ransom, the Holy Ghost in privilege of purchase, and therefore the Father regards Himself as an inheritance for His children whom He purchases.

And therefore, dear friend, no man shall doubt of the love of His sweet fatherhood, and of His dear pity, for more is His mercy than all our wickedness, for whoso calls to Him with all his heart without fail He will hear him, for He is full of mercy. And, therefore, as I said before, with yearning of soul, and certain trust, call upon Him truly with all thy heart. He is thy peerless Father that purchased thee peace, and say confidently to Him, as Himself taught us, "*Pater noster, qui es in cœlis, sanctificetur nomen tuum*" etc., to the end.

Now, my dear friend, thou shalt know that this orison passes all other prayers principally in two things, that is to say, in worthiness and in profit. In worthiness, for that God Himself made it, and therefore do they great shame and great irreverence to Jesus, God's Son, who take themselves to rhyming and curious words, and leave the prayer that He taught us, that knew all the will of God the Father, and which orison comes

more to His pleasing and (asks) what things the wretched caitiff has need to pray for. Also, as I have said, He only knew the Father's will, and He knew all our need.

And, therefore, a hundred thousand are deceived with multiplication of words and of orisons, for when they ween (think) that they have great devotion, then have they a vile carnal pleasure, because such a fleshly pleasure delights them greatly in such flowery language, and therefore, I would that thou wert wary, for I tell thee surely, that it is a vile sensuality, to delight in rhymes and such like gaiety.

If on the one side, St Austin and St Gregory and other saints prayed as they liked, I blame not their prayers, but I blame those that leave the prayer of God, that He Himself made, and taught us to pray, that is, the *Pater noster*, and betake them to the orisons of a saint, when they find it written; [for our Lord Himself says in the gospel]: "When ye will pray, pray not with many words, but pray on this manner, *Pater noster*," etc.

Dear friend, yet shalt thou know on the other side, that the *Pater noster* passes all other prayers in sufficiency, for therein is contained all things whatsoever we have need of, for this life, or for the other, for

we pray therein God the Father, that He deliver us of all ills, and that He give us all good, and that He make us such that we never do ill, and that we may not fail of good. See now, all the ill that grieves us; either it is ill that is done, or it is ill that is to come, or else it is ill that we suffer now. Of that ill that is done, and passed, we pray our sweet Lord that He deliver us thereof, when we say, *Dimitte nobis debita nostra,* etc. We pray Him to deliver us of that ill that is to come, when we say, *Et ne nos inducas in tentationem.* Of ills that we suffer now we pray Him that He deliver us when we say, *Sed libera nos a malo.*

Yet, dear friend, on the other side, know thou that all manner of good that is, either it is earthly good or spiritual good, or endless lasting good; for earthly good we pray when we say, *Panem nostrum quotidianum da nobis hodie;* for spiritual good we pray when we say, *Fiat voluntas tua sicut in cælo et in terra;* for eternal good we pray when we say, *Adveniat regnum tuum;* and we pray for the confirming of all this when we say, *Sanctificetur nomen tuum.*

Now, my dear friend, these are the seven prayers of the Gospel, that our Lord Jesus Christ taught to His disciples.

And thou shalt know that these words that come before, that is to say, *Pater noster qui es in cælis*, teach us how we shall pray, and what we ourselves shall be in prayer. For we should in every prayer have four things, that is to say, perfect love to Him to whom we pray, and certain trust to have that that we pray for, and constant faith in Him in Whom we believe, and true humility in that we of ourselves have no good.

Perfect love is understood in this word *Pater*, for every creature kindly loves his father. Certain trust is contained in this word *noster*, for if He be ours then may we securely trust in Him that He is inclined to us. Constant faith is contained in these words *qui es*, for when we say *qui es* then grant we that God is, whom we never saw; and that is true faith, for faith is no other thing but believing in things that cannot be seen. True humility is betokened in these words, *in cælis*, for when we think how high He is in joy, and how low we are here in care, then are we humbled.

But when we have fastened these four things in our hearts, then may we boldly pray, and say with all our affection *Sanctificetur nomen tuum*, that is to say, hallowed be Thy name; also, confirm Thy name, that

is Father, in us, that we be in such manner Thy children, that we do nothing that is against Thy will, and that we may evermore do that which is pleasing to Thee, through granting of Thy grace. And because we cannot evermore do that perfectly, whilst we are in this wretched world, therefore we pray thus, and say, "*Adveniat regnum tuum*," that is to say, "Thy kingdom come to us that we may reign in Thee, Jesus, in this life through Thy grace, and Thou in us, in the other life through joy." And thus also we pray for those in purgatory.

And because we may nevermore have part in the joy of heaven if we do not Thy will on earth, therefore we pray thus: "*Fiat voluntas tua sicut in cœlo et in terra,*" that is to say, "Thy will be done as in heaven so on earth," as we say, make us to do Thy will, that is, give Thou us grace to do all that Thou commandest, and to leave all that Thou forbiddest; and that so on earth, as in heaven; that is to say, as Michael and Gabriel and Raphael, Cherubim and Seraphim and all the other angels and archangels, and all those that are ordained to the endless life in joy, in every race, in every order and in every age, do Thy will.

And because we cannot do Thy will

whilst we live in this body if Thou sustainest us not, therefore we say: *"Panem nostrum quotidianum da nobis hodie,"* that is, "Give us to-day our daily bread"; also we say, give Thou us strength in body and in soul, and health if it be Thy will, of both. And here know that there are three kinds of bread; there is bodily bread, that is to say, food and clothing; there is spiritual bread, that is, the teaching of Holy Writ; and there is the bread of the Eucharist, that is, the grace in the Sacrament of the altar, to comfort both the one and the other.

But because we are worthy of no good whilst we are bound in sin, therefore we say thus: *"Dimitte nobis debita nostra, sicut et nos dimittimus debitoribus nostris,"* that is to say, "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors." Thou shalt know that our sins bind us as debtors to pain, therefore we pray Jesus to forgive our sins, that is, all that we have sinned in thought, in word and in deed, and that just as we forgive those that have sinned against us.

And because it helps us but little to have forgiveness if we cannot keep ourselves from sin, therefore we pray thus: *"Et ne nos inducas in tentationem,"* that is, "Lead us not into temptation"; as we

say, suffer us not to be overcome in temptation of the devil, nor of the flesh, nor of the world. And not only we pray that we be delivered from all evil temptation, but also we pray that we be delivered from all evil when we say *"Sed libera nos a malo,"* and that is to say, "But deliver us from all ill things" of body and of soul, of sin and of pain for sin, that now is or shall be. Say we, Amen, that is, So be it.

And because our Lord Jesus Christ says in the gospel, "Whatsoever thou prayest thy Father in My name, He will do it," therefore say at the end, *Per Dominum nostrum Jesum Christum,* etc.

And now, my dear friend, understand not that thou shalt say thy *Pater noster* with mouth as I have written it here before thee. But say only the naked letters with thy mouth, and think in thy heart of this that I have said here, of each word by itself; and care not if thou multiply not many *Paters,* for it is better to say one *Pater noster* with good devotion; for thus says St Paul openly: "I would rather say five words in heart devoutly than five thousand with my mouth without devotion."

And on the same manner shalt thou say and do at thy office in the choir, for so says the prophet: *Psallite sapienter,*

that is, "Sing and chant wisely." To say or to sing wisely, that is, that thy heart be in that that thou sayest and, on that that others say, that thou hearest it diligently; for if thy body be at thy service, and thy mouth speak in one manner, and thy heart think of wretchedness, wretchedly then art thou separated, and when thou art so separated thou losest the reward of thy service; for thou oughtest to serve God with all thy heart, with all thy soul and with all thy strength.

But there are many things that are the cause of such wretched separation, as want, drink, rest, clothing, sport, discord, thought, labour. These make a mumbling medley. And therefore take heed what our Lord says in the gospel, "First seek the kingdom of heaven, and all that thou hast need of shall be given without asking." Therefore, dear friend, thou shalt know what thou shalt have in the bliss of heaven.

Chapter xviij

Of the Seven Gifts of Body and Soul

KNOW thou well that thou shalt have seven gifts in body and seven in soul, that is, fairness in body without foulness; strength without feebleness; ease without sloth; liberty without thraldom; pleasure without pain; lovingness without envy; health without sickness; long life without end.

Thou shalt have in soul wisdom without ignorance; friendship without hatred; concord without discord; power without weakness; honour without dishonour; security without fear; joy without sorrow. But the wretches in hell shall have all the reverse both in body and in soul, that is to say, foulness without fairness; sloth without ease; feebleness without strength; thraldom without liberty; anguish without pleasure; sickness without health; death without end. There shall be in their souls ignorance without wisdom; hatred without love; discord without concord; feebleness without power; shame without honour; fear without security; sorrow without joy.

And for this shalt thou seek with all thy might, that thou mayest win the joy of heaven; for there is great joy and so much sweetness that if thou mightest live from the beginning of the world until the end, and have all the pleasure thou couldst ordain, yet thou shouldst, with great right, leave all these to be a day in the joy of heaven.

And thus ends the second degree of contemplation that is, of Holy Writ, of which if thou take good heed in thy heart it shall be easy to thee to keep every word. On the other hand, here hast thou matter to speak unto clerks, be they ever so wise, and to the ignorant, be they ever so rude. And when thou speakest to the wise, suggest these things and ask questions; and when thou speakest to simple men and rude, teach thou them gladly and with sweetness. For thou hast enough whereof thou mayst speak, and how thou shalt amend and rule thy life and other men's also.

Chapter xix

Of the Contemplation of God

THE third degree of contemplation is in God Himself. And that may be on two manners, that is, without in His Manhood, and within in His Godhead so blessed. For thus says St Austin: "Therefore God became Man to make man to see God in his nature, so that whether he looked within or without he might evermore find pasture; without through consideration of His Manhood, within th ough contemplation of His Godhead."

Of His Manhood shalt thou think three things: the meekness of His Incarnation, the sweetness of His conversation, and the great charity of His passion. But this mayest thou not do all at once; and therefore have I separated them for thee, by the seven hours of the day, that thou sayest in the Church, so that no hour pass thee, that thou shalt not be sweetly occupied in thy heart. And now to so do this, shalt thou know that to each hour of the day is a double meditation, one of His Passion and the other of another season.

Chapter xx

Contemplation before Matins

NOW, dear friend, before Matins shalt thou think of the sweet birth of Jesus Christ at first, and then afterwards of His Passion. Of His birth shalt thou think diligently of the time and the place and the hour that the Lord Jesus Christ was born of His Mother Mary. The time was in mid-winter, when it was most cold; the hour was at midnight, the hardest hour that is; the place was in the middle of the street, in a house without walls; in cloths (clouts) was He wound, and as a child was He bound, and in a crib before an ox and an ass that lovely Lord was laid, for there was no other place empty.

And here shalt thou think of Mary's keeping of her Child, and of her spouse Joseph—what joy Jesus sent him. Thou shalt think also of the shepherds that saw the token of His birth, and thou shalt think of the sweet fellowship of angels, and raise up thy heart and sing with them *Gloria in excelsis Deo,* etc.

Of the Passion shalt thou think how

that He was at such a time of the night betrayed by His disciple, and taken as a traitor, and bound as a thief, and led as a felon.

Chapter xxj

Contemplation before Prime

BEFORE Prime thou shalt think of the Passion of Jesus and of His joyful rising. Of His Passion shalt thou think how the Jews led Him into their council, and bore false witness against Him, and put upon Him that He had said blasphemy, that is, slander of God, and that He had said He should have destroyed the temple of God and made again another within the third day; and then they began to drive Him to scorn, and to fool Him as a fool, and spit on Him in scorn, on His fair face; and then they hid His eyes and gave Him great buffets, and then asked him who it was that smote Him; and then they led Him sorrowfully to death, and yet never He asked them once why they so did.

Many other wickednesses they did (to) Him that were long to tell. Also before Prime shalt thou think of the holy rising, that at that time of the day Jesus joyfully rose from the dead to life, when He had destroyed hell, and delivered souls out of the power of the devil.

Chapter xxij

Contemplation before Terce

BEFORE Terce shalt thou think of the Passion and of the coming of the Holy Ghost. Of the Passion shalt thou think how that our Lord at that time was contemptuously stripped naked and bound to a tree in Pilate's house, and so wickedly scourged and beaten that of His sweet body, from the head to the foot, nought was left whole.

And at that same hour thou shalt think of the coming of the Holy Ghost; how at that time of day our Lord Jesus Christ sent the Holy Ghost to His disciples, in the likeness of fire and of tongues, in token that they should abound in words and burn with love, and rightly is this provided by the Providence of the Lord; for in two ways the wicked spirit beguiled man in paradise; with wicked enticement of his tongue and with the coldness of his venom; and therefore comes the Holy Ghost in likeness of tongues, against the enticement of the devil, and in fire to destroy the coldness of his venom.

Chapter xxiij

Contemplation before Mid-day

BEFORE mid-day shalt thou think of the Annunciation and of Jesu's Passion. Of the Annunciation shalt thou think of the great mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, how that He would become man and suffer death for us in that sweet manhood, since He might have bought us again in another way. And that He did to draw to Him thy love, for if one had been thy maker and another thy ransomer, and had suffered in His body all our sorrow to purchase all our love, then our faith would not have been only in One.

Of the Passion shalt thou think at that hour how our Lord Jesus was done to death on the Cross between two thieves, one on His right side, and the other on His left side, and Himself they hanged betwixt them two, as Master of thieves. Here I know not what to say; for if all the sickness of this world and all the sorrow were in the body of one man only, and if that man could conceive all the pain and anguish and sorrow to be in his body that all the

men in this world could think of, yet were it full little or nothing in regard of the sorrow that He suffered for us one hour of the day.

Chapter xxiv

Contemplation before None

BEFORE None shalt thou think of the Passion and of the glorious Ascension. Of the Passion shalt thou think that at such a time of day died the Maker of life for thy love. And here shalt thou think of the words that Jesus spake on the Cross, and of the four tokens that befell in His death.

The first word was this that He spake: "Father, forgive them this sin, for they know not what they do." The other word was this, that He said to the thief: "Forsooth, I say unto thee, this day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise." The third was that He said to His mother of St John His cousin, "Woman, lo! there thy Son," and to the disciple said He: "Man, lo! there thy mother."

The fourth word that He said was this: "God, My God, why hast Thou left Me thus?" The fifth was, "*Sitio*," that is, "I have thirst." The sixth was, "*In manus tuas Domine*, etc.," which is to say, "Father, into Thy hands I give My soul." The seventh word was, "*Con-*

summatum est," that is, "Now is the prophecy fulfilled," and with that word He held His head down and gave up the Ghost.

Now the tokens that were in His death are these: First, all the earth began to tremble, and the veil of the temple burst in two and fell down; the stones burst asunder; the graves opened and the dead men rose, and the sun withdrew his light from the world from mid-day to none.

Of the Ascension shalt thou think, that at such a time of the day went up our Lord Jesus Christ into the Mount of Olivet, with His disciples and His sweet mother Mary; how He ascended into heaven, and set Him on His Father's right hand; and how His disciples turned again into the city, and were in fasting and in prayer until the coming of the Holy Ghost; and there were together a hundred and twenty in a house, to abide the coming of the Holy Ghost, as our Lord commanded them before.

Chapter xxv

Contemplation before Evensong

BEFORE Evensong shalt thou think of Jesu's Passion and His Supper. O the Passion shalt thou think how Joseph of Arimathea purchased of Pilate the body of Jesus, and how they came to the Cross where He hung and they broke the two thigh-bones of the two thieves. And there was a knight ready with a spear, and pierced the side of Jesus, and smote Him to the Heart, and instantly came running down the Precious Blood and water. And that was the ransom of which I spoke before; blessed be that Lord! And then Joseph took Him down from the Cross, because nobody should dwell on the Cross on so high a day as was the morrow.

Of the Supper of Jesus shalt thou think how at that time He gave His precious Flesh and Blood in likeness of bread and wine, that we can see, and it is truly Flesh and Blood of Jesus Christ that we cannot see with bodily eyes.

The third thing is spiritual: the grace that we receive when we take that Flesh and that Blood. We see there the like-

ness of bread and wine, and it is not there, but we believe that there is truly the Flesh and the Blood of Jesus Christ. And nevertheless we cannot see the likeness of flesh. And therefore there, where we should have repugnance to eat the flesh and drink the blood of man, our Lord Jesus Christ turned His Flesh and His Blood into the likeness of bread and wine; to comfort our bodily intelligence through such food as we are wont to see, and also to help our faith, through that we see one thing and believe another.

And therefore, dear friend, when thou shalt go to receive that sweet Flesh and that Blood of Jesus thy Saviour, look that thou have true contrition and repentance, and cleansing of thy sin in thy heart, for there thou receivest Him in the Sacrament, just as though thou receivedst Him in flesh and blood. Blessed be that grace!

Chapter xxvj

Contemplation before Compline

BEFORE Compline shalt thou think how that Joseph and Nicodemus wound the body of Jesus in fair sheets and anointed it with precious ointments, and laid it in a monument of stone, and the Jews set their seals upon the stone, and knights to watch it.

The other thing that thou shalt think in the same time is this: How Jesus on the day of the Supper, when He had supped, He went into a garden with His disciples, and fell down in prayer, and began to sweat in such a manner that the drops of blood dropped from His blessed Face on to the earth.

Chapter xxvij

Of the Contemplation of God in His Manhood

NOW shalt thou think of God's manhood, and afterwards shalt thou know how thou shalt think of Him in His high Godhead. Thou shalt know that God so tempered the knowledge of Himself, from the beginning of mankind that He would not wholly show Himself to man, nor wholly hide Him from man, for if He had wholly showed Himself to man, then had faith been of no value, and unbelief had not then been overcome, for faith is of things that may not be seen, for that that I see is not faith; and if He had wholly hidden Himself from man, then faith would not have been helped, and unbelief had been excused; and for that reason would He in part show and in part hide Himself.

But now mayest thou ask me in how many ways He would show Himself. I say in two ways, one within and the other without. Within He showed Himself through revelation and through rea-

son, without through Holy Writ and through creatures.

Through revelation, when He showed Himself to any folk through inspiration, and through miracles. By reason He comes to man's knowledge in this way. Every man may well see in himself what he is and what he has been; but he may well know that he has not always been; and from that he knows well that some time he began to be; then was there some time when he was not. But when he was not, then might he in no wise make himself; and this man sees in every creature, for he sees every day some go and some come; therefore seeing all things are, and they are not of themselves, therefore it needs must that there be some one to make all things to be; that is to say, of whom all things are. Therefore it behoves necessarily that He through Whom all things are, be without beginning, for if He had beginning, then it behoved that He had beginning of some other; then would He not have been the first Author, and the first beginning of all things.

But there was nothing before Him, then He came of no other, then had He never any beginning. And therefore it behoves that there be one thing that never had beginning. And when man's

reason perforce sees that it may no otherwise be, then he begins to believe steadfastly that one thing is without beginning, that is the Author and Maker and Governor of all things that are.

And Him man calls God, for this word *Deus*, that is to say God, comes of a Greek word that is called *Theos*, and that is as much as to say, one only God. And that this word God betokens.

Chapter xxviij

Of the Contemplation of God in His Deity

AND, dear friend, thou oughtest to know that there is but one God. And thou oughtest to know that no good may fail to God, and because the comfort of fellowship is a good and sweet thing, therefore God may not be without fellowship. Then behoved it that there were many persons in God, the highest goodness. And because fellowship may not be between fewer than two, therefore it behoves that in God be at least two Persons; and because fellowship is little worth where there is neither alliance nor love, therefore it behoves that the Third Person were in God; that were the alliance and the love between the two.

And because unity is good and company also, therefore it behoves that both be in God, and by this reasoning comes man to the knowledge of God that is One God in Himself, and Three in persons. And this same may man see in himself, for he sees in the beginning that he has in himself power and after power has he wisdom. And afterwards he began

to love that wisdom, and then he began to know openly that there is in the soul power, and of that power comes wisdom, and of them both comes love. And when man sees it is so in himself, he ought to know that it should be so in God, that is above him, that is to say, in God is power and of that comes His wisdom, but of both power and wisdom comes love.

And because that of the first Person comes the second, and out of them both comes the third; therefore He calls the first Person God the Father, the second God the Son, and the third God the Holy Ghost. And because that it was wont to be thus in many men, that the father was more feeble than the son, because of his age, and the son more unwise than the father, because of his youth, and so that a man should not think that it were so of God; therefore is power attributed to God the Father, wisdom to God the Son; and because that this word Ghost sounds somewhat ghostly, therefore are sweetness, love and goodness attributed to the Holy Ghost.

In this manner comes man first to the knowledge of his God, how He is without beginning, and why He is called God, One in substance and Three in persons, and why the first person is called God the Father,

the second God the Son, the third God the Holy Ghost, and why power is attributed to God the Father and wisdom to God the Son and goodness to God the Holy Ghost. In such manner shalt thou know thy God.

Chapter xxix

Of Contemplation

THE first degree of contemplation is that the soul be led into itself again and gathered within itself. The next degree is that man see what he is, so gathered together. The third degree is that he lift himself above himself and take pains to look on his God in his own nature. But to himself can he never come until he has learned so to refrain from every bodily imagination, earthly and ghostly, that comes to his own heart, either of hearing, or of tasting, or of touching, or of any other bodily sense, as to refuse it and to tread it down, that he may see himself such as he is without the body.

Therefore, dear friend, take good heed how wonderful the soul is in itself, and how it is one in nature, and yet notwithstanding how it does divers things; for thyself seest that which thou seest with thine eyes, hearest with thy ears, swallowest with thy mouth, smellest with thy nose and touchest what thou touchest with all thy members.

Think yet afterward how great thy soul is, that only with a thought it can comprehend heaven and earth, and all that in them are, if they were a thousandfold greater than they are or can be; when man's soul is so great and so noble that no creature may understand it perfectly, then great and noble is He that made so noble things of nothing! He is above all things, and within all things, and without all things, and beneath all things. He is above all things, governing all; beneath all things, bearing all; within all things, fulfilling all; without all things, surrounding all.

Such manner of contemplation engenders in man steadfast faith and solid devotion. After this shalt thou think how generous He is, and that mayest thou see in many ways. See at the beginning how generous He is of earthly goods, how He gives His good things to the evil, as well as to the good, in all things that thou seest in earth. Then afterwards see how generous He is to forgive, for if a man had done as much ill to Him as all the men of this world might do, yet would He be a hundred times more ready to forgive him than that wretched soul would be to ask of Him forgiveness.

Chapter xxx

How to live Honourably and Charitably and Meekly

NOW my dear friend, if thou livest after this teaching, then shalt thou live honourably, and that is the first part of our sermon, that I touched at the beginning. And after that shalt thou study to live lovingly, as to thy fellow-Christian, and unto that shalt thou set wholly thy might to love and to be loved. Thou shalt love all men in God, that is to say only for goodness, not for their fairness of body, nor for their strength, nor for any other bodily virtue, for they that love in such manner, they love not for God's sake, and to love man in God is to love him for anything that may not be loved out of God, as for goodness, or for righteousness, or truth.

If we be good, then have we no friend but God, nor no enemy but evil, and therefore shall we love those that are good because they are good, and the evil shall we love because they may be good; in this way lovest thou nothing but goodness, since thou lovest all things for goodness.

And if thou wilt be loved, show thyself lovable. If thou wilt be lovable, receive then these words without forgetting. Do that that man bids thee or asks thee that is good. Take that that man gives thee, and grumble not. And that that man says to thee suffer it meekly, and be not angry. If thou livest thus truly, then livest thou lovingly.

Dear sister, and friend, then afterwards shalt thou study to live meekly. And to do this shalt thou know that there are two kinds of meekness. The one comes of truth, and the other comes of charity. The first mayest thou have by knowing thyself, for thou canst in no way of this world see thyself what thou art in truth if thou be not meek. The other kind of meekness canst thou have if thou thinkest of the meekness of Jesus Christ, how that He humbled Himself, that never did sin, and such meekness comes purely of charity.

Now, my dear sister and friend, thou knowest what it is to live honourably, charitably and meekly, and that is to live *perfectly*.

Now our sweet Lord Jesus Christ give us grace so to honour God, and our fellow-Christian so to love, and oneself so to humble, that we may for our honouring

be honoured, and for our love be loved, and for our meekness be lifted up in the high bliss of heaven that Jesus bought for us with His sweet Blood and His precious Passion. Amen.

End of the Mirror of St Edmund, Archbishop of Canterbury.

Dulce nomen Domini nostri Jesu Christi sit benedictum in secula seculorum. Amen.

May the sweet name of our Lord Jesus Christ be blessed for ever and ever. Amen.

The End

[This translation is made from Mr Horstmann's edition of the text of the Vernon and Thornton MSS. in the Library of the Early English Writers, published by Messrs Swan and Sonnenschein, whose kind permission to use it is here gratefully acknowledged.]

The Publishers are indebted to Monsignor Ward, of St Edmund's College, Ware, for the copy of the Portrait reproduced as the frontispiece to this book.

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